

Here, dull and hopeless, he'd lie down and
 trace
 How sidelong crabs had scrawl'd their
 crooked race,
 Or sadly listen to the tuneless cry
 Of fishing gull or clanging golden-eye;
 What rime the sea-birds to the marsh would
 come,
 And the loud bittern, from the bull-rush
 home,
 Gave from the salt ditch side the bellowing
 boom:
 He nursed the feelings these dull scenes
 produce,
 And loved to stop beside the opening sluice,
 Where the small stream, confined in narrow
 bound,
 Ran with a dull, unvaried, sadd'ning sound.

The last two lines might be a description of
 Crabbe's
 own verse; and certainly the 'muscles* are a
 little difficult
 to swallow; but then we are meant to see
 the scene, not
 to like it. Those who are amused by contrasts
 should turn
 to the picture of this same Dunwich coast in
 Swinburne's
By the North Sea. Nothing could be more
 different; there,
 on the contrary, we are meant to admire
 much more than
 to see.

Miles and miles and miles of desolation!
 Leagues on leagues on leagues without a
 change!
 Sign or token of some eldest nation
 Here would make the strange land not so
 strange.
 Time^forgotten, yea since Time's creation,
 Seem these borders where the sea-birds
 range.

Crabbe indulges in no such flourishes—he is
 down on his
 knees among the bugloss and sea-lavender;
 but his land-
 scapes are, perhaps, the most permanent part
 of his work.
 Here, too, he stands between two ages: Pope
 would have
 thought him too mean, Johnson too minute
 and precise,
 while Wordsworth and Coleridge found him

too un-
imaginative. And yet even his portraits of
human character
will perhaps be outlived by these still-lives and
landscapes-
such as that favourite of Tennyson's (whose
Enoch *Arden*
was indebted to Crabbe's *Parting Hour*):